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AUTHOR Grandfield, Raymond J., Comp.
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ABSTRACT

The 24 case studies presented are built around common classroom and coordination problems encountered by student teachers in distributive education (DE) during their field experiences. Each case is presented in a brief narrative or dialogue form and is followed by several questions designed to promote an analysis of the problem and suggest proposals for solution. The case studies include a range of discipline, ethical, and interpersonal problems in classroom and work settings, and involve students, teachers, DE coordinators, and employers of students. It is hoped the case studies will assist student teachers in becoming aware of some of the problems encountered by DE teacher-coordinators and aid them in formulating decisions they will need to make as teacher-coordinators. (Author/AG)

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A SELECTION OF CASE STUDIES

FOR

PRE-SERVICE DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION TEACHERS

Volume I

Delaware State College
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P R E F A C E

The case studies contained in this publication are built around common classroom and coordination problems encountered by student teachers during their field experiences.

It is hoped that these case studies will assist student teachers in becoming aware of some of the problems encountered by D.E. teacher-coordinators and aid them in formulating decisions they will need to make as teacher-coordinators.

The cases were taken from actual situations and were developed by a group of distributive education majors at Delaware State College under the direction of Dr. Raymond J. Grandfield.

CASE STUDY #1

Mrs. Gold was a first-year D.E. teacher and faced a constant struggle to maintain control over one of her classes. The class consisted of all boys and many of them were repeaters.

One day John arrived 15 minutes late for class. This was his first day back after a week's suspension from her class. He had been suspended for using obscene words and gestures. He knew that if there was any more trouble in the same class that he would receive permanent suspension. Still, he acted as though he wanted to cause some trouble.

He walked back to his seat and immediately began to talk to the people around him. The teacher ignored him at first but later told him to be quiet. He ignored her and started yelling obscenities. She began to write out a slip to send him to the office. At this point John started up at her and began threatening her. Suddenly he came toward her and slapped her twice. The class did not move. She started to cry and ran out of the room. John ran after her and they were both met by the principal. John was suspended permanently.

1. Could Mrs. Gold have avoided the problem with John which meant permanent suspension?

2. What defense does a woman have when a student threatens to strike her?

3. What would you have done in this situation?

CASE STUDY #2

Bob had been a storyteller all through school, and it did not stop when he got to D.E. class. He was in class with a lot of boys that hung around together and liked to have a good time harassing people. After a week of Bob's stories about himself (kicked a football 60 yards, made his own car, etc.), the boys started to get nasty with their comments. Most of this was done before class started, but it started to carry over into the class time.

The students told Mrs. Work that he was like this in all of his classes. She asked them to refrain from making nasty comments and to ignore him and he would probably stop his bragging. There continued to be comments made when class discussions took place and at various other times.

Mrs. Work had talked to Bob's guidance counselors about him and suggested that he be transferred to a smaller class where she felt he would get along better with the others, but this was not done.

One day Bob was so unbearable that Mrs. Work sent him on an errand so that she could talk to the class about the situation and discuss ways to remedy it. Bob knew why he was sent out, so he went to the guidance counselor's office to get a change. He was put in another class of Mrs. Work's and did much better.

1. Should Mrs. Work have discussed the problem with all students or with the group with which she was having trouble?

2. Should Bob have been included in this group when the discussion took place?

3. What should the guidance office have done when the teacher approached them about having Bob put in another class?

4. Should Mrs. Work have spoken with Bob individually in order to solve the problem?

5. Does class size have any effect on solving behavioral problems of this type?

6. What would you have done had you been Mrs. Work? Why?

CASE STUDY #3

Mr. Smith's D.E. class was having a panel discussion and two of the panel members got in a heated argument. One boy, Joe, was always trying to impress everyone and did not get along with any of his teachers. The other boy, Tom, was just a happy-go-lucky type of person. Mr. Smith stopped the argument by introducing some other facts. Right after this the bell rang and Joe and Tom started at each other again. They were right outside the door and they began to fight. Mr. Smith came to the door and broke up the fight. In doing so, he pushed Joe up against a locker fairly hard. After this Joe went to the nurse and Tom left.

The next day when Mr. Smith found out that he had broken Joe's arm, he went right to Joe and told him that he did not mean to hurt him, he was just trying to stop the fight and that he was very sorry. Joe told Mr. Smith that his parents were extremely mad and that they were coming to school today to find out exactly what did happen, and Joe promised Mr. Smith that his father was going to get even with him for breaking his arm.

1. Did Mr. Smith handle the disagreement in class properly? Discuss.

2. How should Mr. Smith handle Joe's parents when he meets them?

3. In the future, what should Mr. Smith do in order to make Joe a better student and show him that he is concerned with how well Joe does in class?

CASE STUDY #4

Danny was one of those boys who delighted in being troublesome. He clowned, he lied and he skipped classes. He was quite capable of passing any subject in high school, but he was always tottering on the brink of failure. Once when he was suspended for two weeks, he missed some tests, neglected to make them up and did fail those subjects.

His teachers, knowing his ability, tried to help him pull out of his disturbing pattern and become a better student and a better citizen. Some were patient, some were firm, but neither approach worked. The guidance department then placed him in the D.E. program.

The D.E. coordinator made room for him in his program and their DECA chapter. Although Danny wasn't a very active DECA member, when the chapter went to the state leadership conference and competed in the competitive events, Danny's coordinator entered him in events where Danny could be of no real harm to his chapter's chances of winning the state competition. He did this so that Danny could gain recognition and feel a part of a winning team. They had a winning chapter this year and finished second in state competition.

And then the coordinator found out that Danny had lied to him when he said he was passing everything and was eligible to compete. Danny had thought that the worst that would happen would be that he would be dropped from the chapter some day. But the situation was more serious. It meant that the chapter was disqualified from the state competition because a member had failed to meet the standards of the state association.

The coordinator knew what had to be done. He had to notify the state association, and he did, disqualifying his chapter from all the winnings.

1. How was the coordinator to tell the chapter and the school?
2. What action should be taken concerning Danny?
3. Should the coordinator have disqualified his chapter, especially since Danny's efforts had no effect on the outcome of any of the events?
4. Should Danny be allowed to participate in any future chapter activities if he admits he has learned his lesson and will never do anything like this again?
5. Who should make the decision on the above question?
6. What would you do in this situation? Why?

CASE STUDY #5

During lunch one day, a teacher-coordinator overheard John and Bill discussing a matter.

John was saying, "Man, I really did it this time."

"What's that?" asked Bill.

John continued, "I got caught smoking in school again. It's my second offense which means a three-day suspension."

"Are they going to call your folks?" asked Bill.

"Both my parents work, so the principal asked me to deliver this envelope to them. The envelope was sealed, but I opened it so I could read the letter. The letter tells the whole story."

"Do you think this will kill your chances of getting that mini-bike your folks agreed to let you get?" asked Bill.

"You better believe it will. I was supposed to stay out of trouble if I wanted it," answered John.

"Say, John! Does that letter say anything about your parents having to call the principal?" asked Bill.

"No, not a word."

"Your problem is solved then, John. Rip up the letter and stay away from the house those three days. No one will be the wiser," said Bill.

"I thought about doing that, but I don't know if I should."

"Look, you want that mini-bike, don't you?" asked Bill.

"You know I do!" said John.

"Well?"

"Right, I'll do it." With that John ripped up the letter and threw it in the trash.

1. Should the teacher-coordinator forget the incident?
2. Should he go to the principal with the matter?
3. Should he confront the two students and handle it himself?
4. If you decided to handle it yourself, what course of action would you take? Why?

CASE STUDY #6

A D.E. coordinator is making assignments to a class. The coordinator assigns three chapters of reading and all of the questions at the end of each chapter, each chapter consisting of no less than ten questions. Before the class period ends, the teacher-coordinator makes the remark, "If you don't have the assignment written out and prepared for tomorrow, don't bother to come to my class."

The next morning the students returned to this particular class with their assignments completed. During the class period the teacher-coordinator never once mentioned the assignments. Instead, he did the introduction to the assigned chapters.

1. Would you have done this as a coordinator? Why? Why not?

2. How do you think the students felt about this assignment and the following assignments? Were their feelings justified?

3. What is the purpose of homework or outside class assignments?

CASE STUDY #7

Mr. Jones, the D.E. teacher-coordinator, was giving a test. He walked around the room, making himself available if anyone had any questions about the test. It was a multiple choice test and, therefore, it would be easy to cheat since the desks were fairly close. The classroom was crowded, so there was nothing he could do about moving the desks. He walked around and tried to discourage cheating. Someone came to the door, and when he came back into the room, he saw one of his students looking on another student's paper. He had never told the students what he would do in a situation like this, so he went to his desk and wrote out notes saying that he would like to see the two students after class.

After class, the student that was looking swore that he had not looked, and the other student said that he did not know anything was going on. Mr. Jones knew he had seen the one student look but decided to just let it go with a warning to the boys.

1. Should Mr. Jones set up rules at the beginning of the year about cheating? Why? Why not?

2. Did he do the right thing in letting them both go with only a warning?

3. Should he have talked to them immediately when he suspected them of cheating?

4. What would you have done in this particular situation? Why?

5. Why do students cheat?

CASE STUDY #8

A unit in advertising had been administered to the class. Subject matter was presented in a most thorough manner. Seemingly, the material rendered motivated the class, because after the presentation the class exhibited skills which proved their interest in the unit being taught.

As an evaluation, the students were required to bring examples of advertising showing the types of advertising and their effectiveness in our modern day society.

Two students were not ready to show or relate to the class their evaluative materials as asked to do.

1. What should the D.E. coordinator do?
2. Is there ever an excuse on the part of the students for not having homework prepared? If so, when?
3. Should they be given an extension to complete this assignment? If so, why?
4. How would you handle this situation?

CASE STUDY #9

There is an intelligent girl in class who is a constant source of problems. She is orderly when the teacher-coordinator is covering points of interest to her, but when the class studies something she doesn't like, she becomes unruly. She talks, passes notes, and generally distrubs her classmates.

The coordinator has taken her aside and talked to her about her attitude toward D.E. She says that she is sorry and that she didn't realize she was causing such a problem. There is a marked improvement in her actions in class for the first couple of days, but then she begins to drift back into her old routine of "classroom disturbance."

Two weeks later in the middle of class, the teacher asked her to write something on the board and he received a very sarcastic remark in return. The coordinator asked her one more time and she got up, came to the front of the class, took a swing at the teacher and missed, and then began shouting obscenities. The coordinator told her to leave the class and go to the office. She refused and said something to the effect of "make me."

1. What does the teacher do?

2. Should she be readmitted to class? If yes, what steps should be taken before doing so?

3. Could this situation have been avoided? How?

CASE STUDY #10

After lunch period, Ken Miller came into your office and returned $10.00 he had borrowed two days earlier to buy his girlfriend a birthday present. Ken is President of the D.E. Club and Vice President of the school Student Government. This is Ken's second year in D.E. Prior to his entering the program he had been in trouble several times, once having been arrested for petty larceny. Since entering the program, Ken has been on the honor roll and has been a credit to himself and the program.

After school Bob Johnson came into your office and reported he had lost $10.00. Bob said he discovered his wallet missing after his fourth period class with you. Ken had returned Bob's wallet to him, minus $10.00, stating that he had found it after class on the floor behind Bob's desk, but had not seen Bob until after school to return it. Ken cannot explain where he obtained the $10.00 he had paid you, but he said that he did not remove $10.00 from the wallet.

1. Would you inform Ken's parents? Why? Why not?
2. Would you inform the principal? Why? Why not?
3. Would you permit Ken to remain in the D.E. program?
4. Would Ken's next grade reflect the incident?
5. Since Ken was a co-op student, would you inform his employer?
6. Would you notify the police?
7. How would you handle the above incident?

CASE STUDY #11

At the beginning of the class period Mr. Johnson, a D.E. teacher, started to take role, marking the absences in his role book. Before he finished this task, he was notified that the school principal was outside and wished to speak to him. Mr. Johnson finished taking the role and then stepped outside the door.

When he returned less than a minute later, he noticed his role book was missing. He asked the person who had taken the book to please return it immediately, but no one responded. He then ordered every student to take out paper and write a 5,000 word composition on the "evils of stealing" and told them to have their parents sign the paper that evening and to return the composition the following day.

1. If you were this teacher, what would you have done?

2. Is your course of action fair to the entire class?

3. If your first course of action failed, what would you do next?

4. When you found the student, how would you discipline him or her?

5. If you never found the student or the book, what would you do about reporting those missing grades on the report card?

CASE STUDY #12

In a 12th grade D.E. class a student teacher arrives to teach the class for eight weeks. The student teacher is a 22 year old attractive young lady.

There is a 17 year old boy in the class that is trying to rattle her composure by making wise cracks in class, such as, "How about a date tonight cutie?" or "Boy, wish all my teachers were as young and cute as you."

1. Should the teacher ignore the student?
2. If not, what should be her immediate action?
3. Could she have prevented this situation in the first place?
4. Would it be necessary for the student teacher to relate the problem to her superivsing teacher?

CASE STUDY #13

The teacher-coordinator assigned problems to the students. One student refused to do her problems. Instead, she decided to disturb the class with noise. The teacher requested her to go outside and take a rest ("maybe you aren't feeling well"). The student refused to do anything the teacher asked of her. However, the noise continued.

1. What would you have done? Why?

2. Could the teacher have avoided this situation? How?

3. If it had been you, what would your first step have been?

CASE STUDY #14

A student teacher is assigned to the high school from which he graduated and is personal friends with many of the students. He is not much older than the students. He is accepted among the students as though he were really one of them.

The problem is that he knows some of these students are on drugs. He doesn't know what type of drugs they are on, except that it must be a very mild type. They are never affected severely, or at least he has never seen them lose control of their senses totally.

Many of them have told him the effects are short lived and they aren't hooked on anything. He has reason to believe that he knows the identity of their suppliers, or at least one of them. He is also sure that he could find out the identity of other suppliers.

1. Should he go to the police and let them handle the problem?

2. Should he tell anyone besides the police, such as parents, principal, or sponsoring teacher?

3. Should he better inform himself about drugs and attempt to help these young people himself?

CASE STUDY #15

Mr. Sell, a new D.E. coordinator at the U.B. Lerner Regional Vocational-Technical High School, was asked to rearrange the coordination visits he had planned for that day; he was to "baby-sit" in the Mill and Cabinet Shop because no substitute could be found for the regular teacher who had called in sick that morning. The shop area contained a large open room with work benches and power tools occupying most of the floor space, a 20-student capacity classroom, and two or three storage areas opened onto the floor of the main shop.

When Mr. Sell arrived in the shop he recorded the attendance for his 18 student cabinet makers then sent them into the shop area to work on their projects. At 11:10 a.m. the clean-up period began. All had gone well until just toward the end of the clean-up. With ten minutes to go until the boys were to be released to board the buses which would return them to their home schools, Mr. Sell noticed that an awl had been driven into a wooden work bench. Efforts by Mr. Sell and members of the class to remove the awl from the bench failed. By this time there were about five minutes left in the class period.

1. If you were Mr. Sell, how would you handle this situation? Why?

2. Could this situation have been avoided? How?

CASE STUDY #16

You as the teacher-coordinator have assigned some small group projects to your project students and have to leave the room for a few moments to pick up some supplies. When you leave, the groups are working quietly.

As you return to the room, the students are laughing and creating a great deal of noise. They quiet down immediately, except for one girl who has not seen you some in; she continues reading aloud from a paperback book. The book she is reading from is of the "adult" type, complete with illustrations. As she realizes you have returned to the room and have been listening, she quickly puts the book in her purse.

1. What would you do? Why?

2. Could this situation have been avoided? How?

CASE STUDY #17

Carl is a tenth grader first-year D.E. student in senior high school. He is bright and has abilities that place him in the upper third of his class. However, his teachers and classmates consider him a pest. No activity can be launched in class without several varied interrupations from Carl. He jumps from his seat, voices complaints, and sputters about things in general. All efforts of his teacher-coordinator have failed to change his conduct. His air of superiority and his deportment continue in the distributive education classroom.

1. What are some of the reasons for such conduct on the part of persons such as Carl?

2. As long as he passes in all of his work, does not really injure anyone, and does not refuse to obey his teachers, would it not be better to let him alone?

3. Is this a matter between Carl and the teacher, or does the class have any proper interest in the conditions?

4. Should his parents be consulted?

5. Should the class learn to understand and make allowances?

6. To what extent are the teachers responsible for curbing tendencies like Carl has which may seriously handicap pupils socially?

7. Should Carl be allowed to be an "individual" if he chooses?

CASE STUDY #18

A D.E. coordinator had been teaching a unit in advertising. One day the class was asked to evaluate an advertisement from a newspaper or magazine. The coordinator passed out to the students an evaluation sheet with 25 questions. The students were to check "yes" if the ad accomplished what the question asked. They were to check "no" if it did not. As the coordinator worked with individual students, she noticed one of the students arbitrarily marking the evaluation without referring to the ad.

1. What would you do as a coordinator in this situation?

2. Why would you handle this situation in this way?

3. What might have caused this situation?

CASE STUDY #19

John, a high school senior who is a second-year D.E. student, is extremely unorganized. He is an intelligent young man and enjoys art. His ambition in life is to be a designer and interior decorator. He sees no relationship between the required courses for graduation and distributive education. He comes to class day after day without assignments, and when allowed additional time, he will not bother to get the assignments completed. The other students always have "cute" remarks ready when John enters the room. The students laugh at him constantly because he is never in the right place at the right time with assignments ready. He is failing in all subjects.

1. What steps can the D.E. coordinator take to help a student become organized?

2. How can the D.E. coordinator help to improve a student's image so that the laughter of his peers will cease?

3. How can the D.E. coordinator relate the required courses to D.E. and teach the student that they are important?

CASE STUDY #20

The D.E. coordinator has a student who has been producing work of A's and B's. The D.E. coordinator knows the capability of this student, yet he finds the student's work has been dropping to the point where he is now getting C's and D's. The D.E. coordinator can not arrive at an answer for the student's behavior.

1. Should the D.E. coordinator have a private discussion with the student to find out the sudden change? Why? Why not?

2. Should the D.E. coordinator just wait to see if the student's progress changes? Why?

3. What action should be taken by the D.E. coordinator?

4. As his D.E. coordinator, what action would you take? Why?

CASE STUDY #21

There is a retail establishment which sells men's and ladies' clothing. It has a manager and an assistant manager. There are six D.E. students on the floor. The manager tells two of the students to separate all dresses in different departments and put them on separate racks, regardless of sale price. The two students did as they were told.

That afternoon while the manager was out, the assistant manager told the two students to reseparate all the dresses because they were on sale and all sale dresses belong on the same rack. He said if the students didn't do as they were told they were going to be fired.

1. Should the students move the dresses as the assistant manager ordered? Why or why not?

2. What is your role as the coordinator in this situation?

3. Could this situation have been avoided? How?

CASE STUDY #22

While observing a D.E. student on the job in the process of selling an air conditioner with a built-in humidifier, the following situation occurred.

The customer wanted to know the technical features of the unit. He asked the student questions concerning the power of the unit, the number of B.T.U.'s and the square feet that the unit would cool. The student was unable to answer the customer's questions satisfactorily. As a result, he lost the sale.

1. How would you handle this situation? Why?

2. Could this situation have been avoided? How?

CASE STUDY #23

While working as a stock clerk, a D.E. student stole $500 in merchandise. You have just received a call from his employer informing you of the situation.

1. How would you handle this situation? Why?
2. Could the theft have been prevented? How?
3. What is the role of the coordinator involving this sort of problem?

CASE STUDY #24

A D.E. coordinator in a small town may loose his largest training station because several of the students employed there have quit their jobs. The manager feels that it is not good business to invest time and money in training when the students leave before they can become an asset to his business.

1. Why do you think this situation occurred?
2. What would you do as the D.E. coordinator? Why?
3. Could this situation have been avoided? How?